Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
Tulare Lake Basin Water Control Plan

Triennial Review, Basin Planning

October 24, 2012

The Southern San Joaquin Valley Water Quality Coalition (Coalition), representing the Kings River Subwatershed, the Kaweah River Subwatershed, the Tule River Subwatershed and the Kern River Subwatershed, see **Plate 1**, that essentially covers the Tulare Lake Basin, has continuously been involved in the implementation of the objectives of the Water Quality Control Plan for the Tulare Lake Basin, and since formation has been engaged in the Triennial Review process.

The Coalition appeared in the 13 September 2007 Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) public workshop, provided both written and oral testimony; transmitted 20 May 2008 comments on the Regional Board's List of Water Quality Issues; conducted meetings with the Regional Board staff 24 July 2008 and 19 January 2009; submitted further comments February 1, 2010; and attended the Regional Board meeting of 18 March 2010 wherein Resolution No. R5-2010-0023 Approving the Triennial Review and Work Plan for the Tulare Lake Basin was adopted. In 2010, Resolution No. R5-2010-0023 prioritized the water quality issues upon which Basin Planning would be conducted over the next three years, as follows:

- Beneficial Use Designations
- Wetlands
- Salt and Nitrate Management Plan
- Groundwater Assessment and Control Programs

The 2013 Joint Triennial Review of the Water Quality Control Plans, Attachment 1B, for the Tulare Lake Basin, reprioritized the issues identified in Resolution No. R5-2010-0023 and excluded Wetlands as follows:

- Salt and Nitrate Management Plan
- Beneficial Use Designation
- Groundwater Assessment and Control Plans

Issue 1: Salt and Nitrate Management Plan.

Under Description, it is stated:

> "Elevated salinity and nitrates in surface and ground waters in California's Central Valley is an increasing problem affecting much of California. As surface and ground water supplies become scarcer, and as wastewater streams become more concentrated, salinity and nitrate impairments are occurring with greater frequency and magnitude."

Presented by R. L. Schafer, P.E.
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Although the statement has been used repeatedly by the Regional Board, data correlated by the Coalition during the past six (6) years does not support that statement. There has not been an exceedance of Nitrate, Nitrate as N or Electrical Conductivity in the surface waters monitored by the Coalition. **Attachments 1 through 4** are graphs of the actual levels of Nitrate plus Nitrite as N and Electrical Conductivity of surface waters of the Tule River and Deer Creek from 2006 through 2012. The maximum Nitrate as N was 1.10 mg/l and the maximum Electrical Conductivity was 283 micromhos/centimeter @ 25°C (umhos/cm).

The surface water flows of the Southern Sierra Nevada Mountains are of high quality and cannot be considered as having elevated levels of salinity and nitrates. Surface waters should be removed from the statement.

With respect to groundwater, we have obtained data sets of Nitrate and Electrical Conductivity from the communities of Tipton and Poplar and the City of Porterville, see **Plate 2**, which provide a swath of groundwater quality being used for domestic purposes within the central portion of the Tulare Lake Basin, **Attachments 5 through 10**.

Issue 2: Beneficial Use Designations.

As previously stated, the Coalition supports consideration of the de-designation of MUN, IND, PRO, REC1, WARM and COLD for surface waters of reaches of valley floor streams that intermittently flow and are typically dry or are above a prescribed level. The Coalition supports the staff's efforts to reevaluate the groundwater beneficial uses in the Tulare Lakebed.

Issue 3: Groundwater Assessment and Control Programs.

Although the Basin Plan describes various groundwater quality problems that exist throughout the Basin and includes numerous policies that address prevention and clean up of groundwater quality programs, the current proposed Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program General Order for groundwater will result in the development of a Groundwater Quality Assessment Report.

It appears that Issue 1: Salt and Nitrate Management Plan and Issue 3: Groundwater Assessment and Control Programs, as set forth in the Triennial Review as high priority issues, will be addressed by the Regional Board's proposed Waste Discharge Requirements General Order for the Tulare Lake Basin.

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SOUTHERN SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY WATER QUALITY COALITION

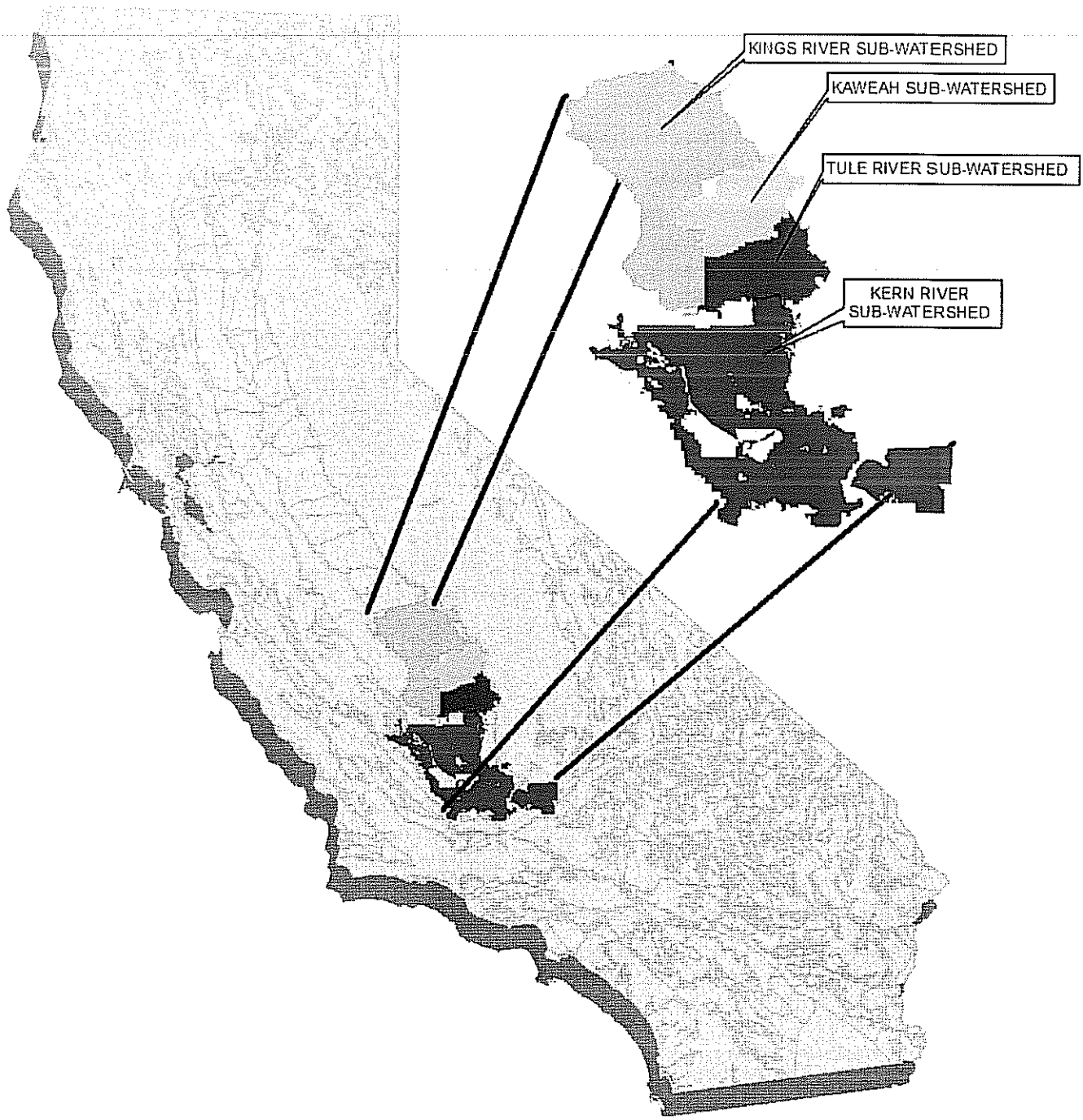
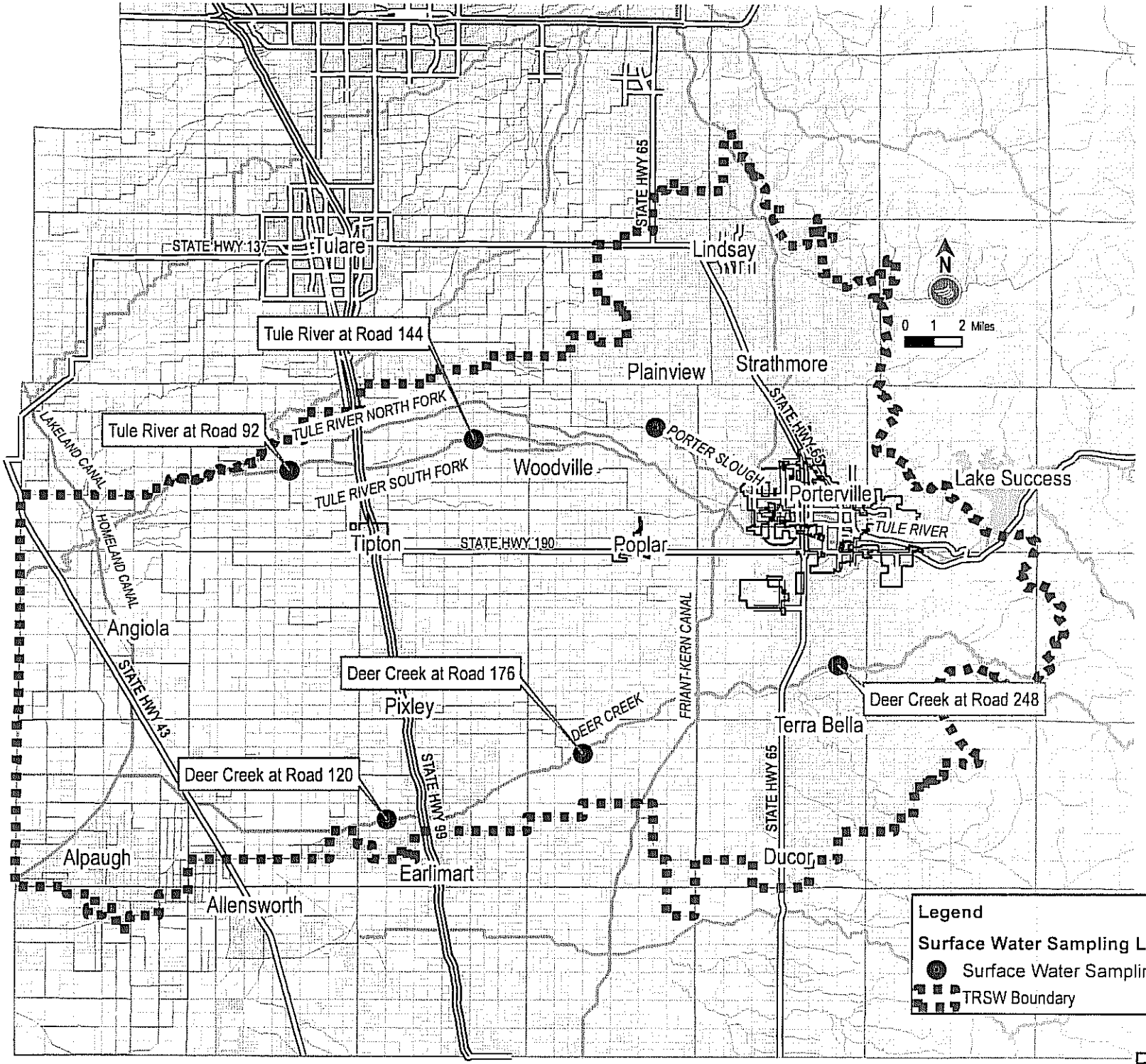


PLATE 1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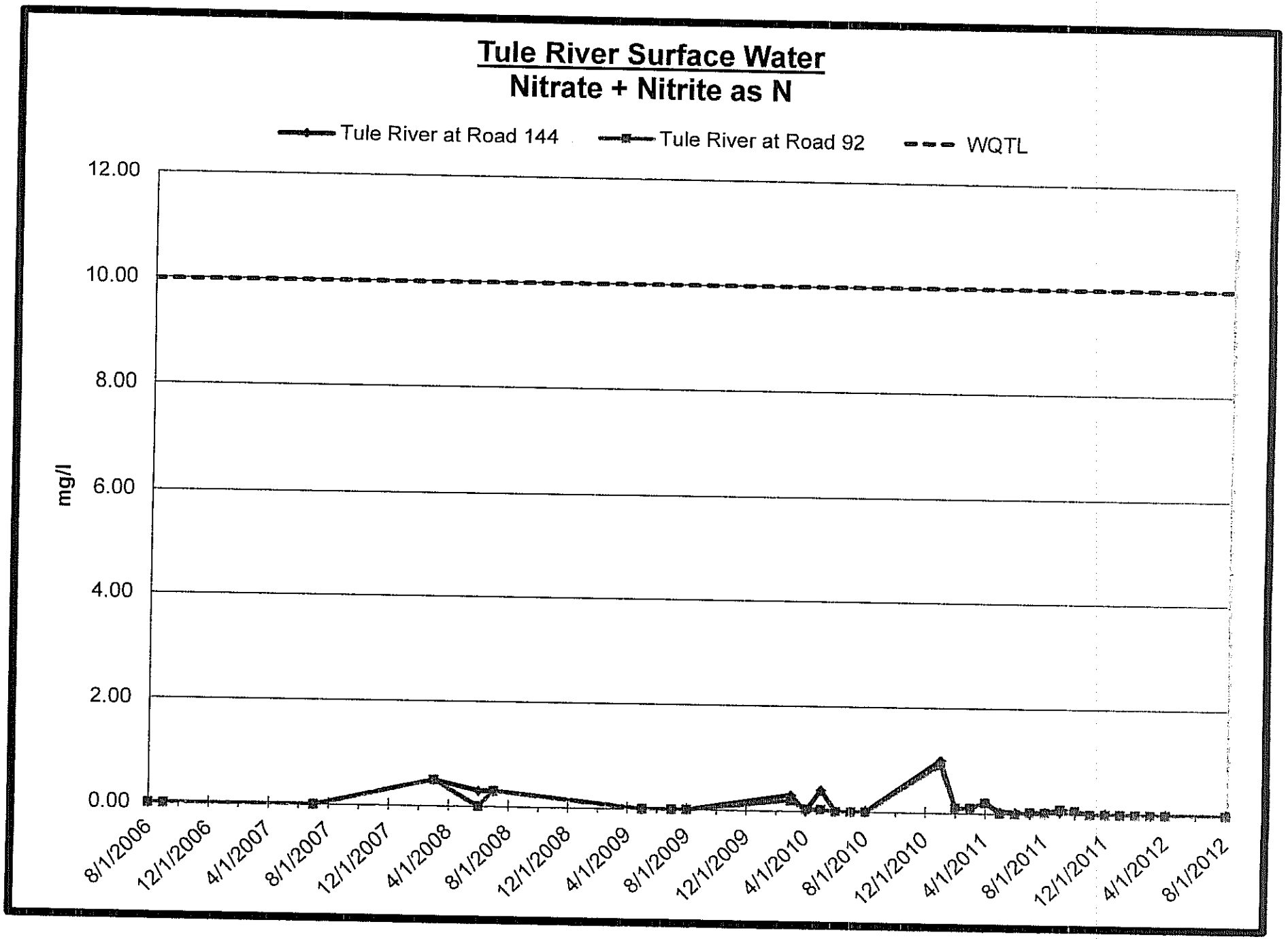
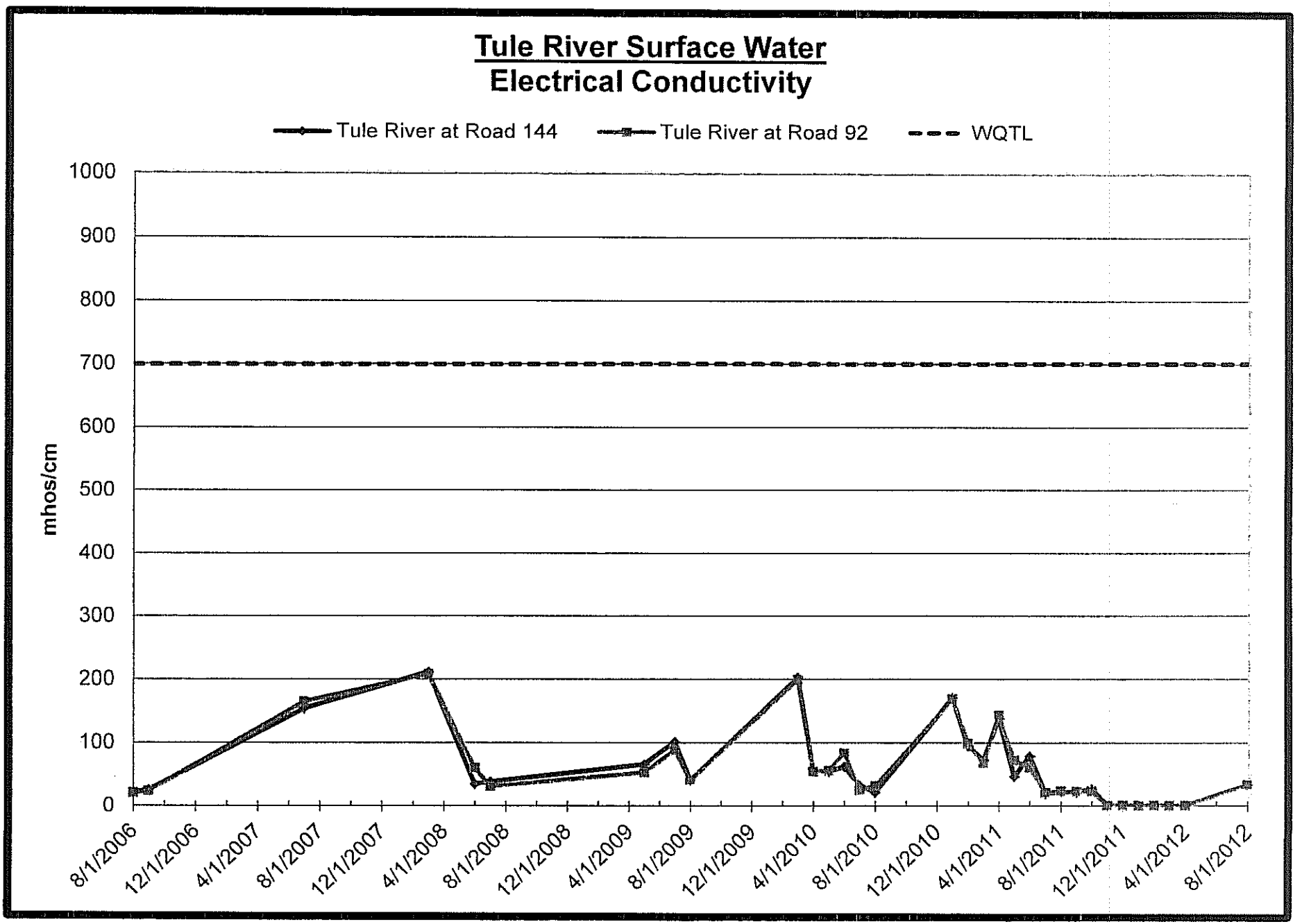
Tule River at Road 92
Deer Creek at Road 176
Deer Creek at Road 120
Deer Creek at Road 248
Tulare
Lindsay
Plainview
Strathmore
Woodville
Porterville
Lake Success
Tipton
Poplar
Angiola
Pixley
Terra Bella
Alpaugh
Earlimart
Ducor
Allensworth
STATE HWY 137
STATE HWY 65
STATE HWY 190
STATE HWY 43
STATE HWY 99
TULE RIVER NORTH FORK
TULE RIVER SOUTH FORK
TULE RIVER
PORTER SLOUGH
DEER CREEK
LAKELAND CANAL
HOMELAND CANAL
FRIANT-KERN CANAL
N
0 1 2 Miles
Legend
Surface Water Sampling Location
Surface Water Sampling Location
TRSW Boundary

PLATE 2

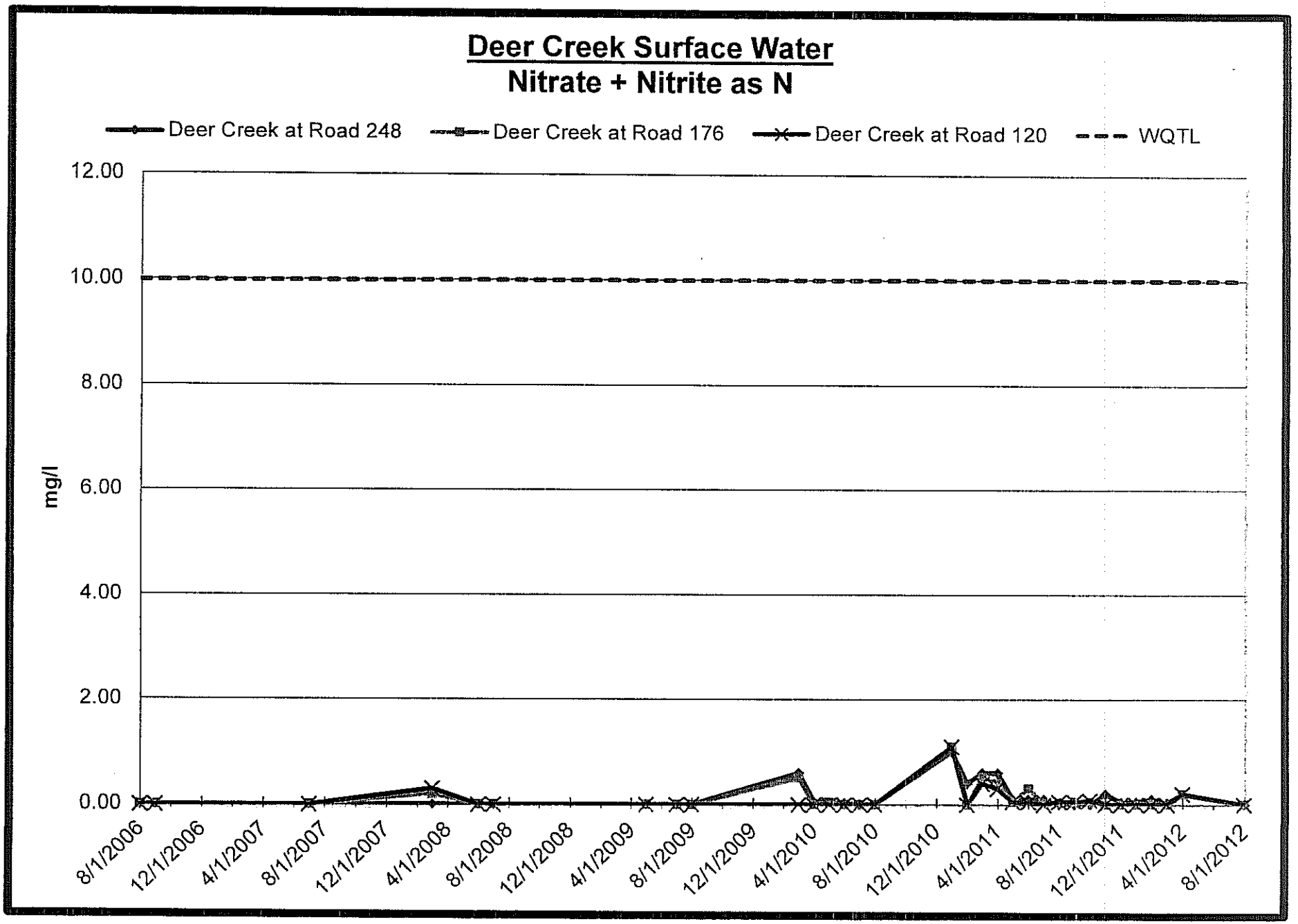


Attachment 1

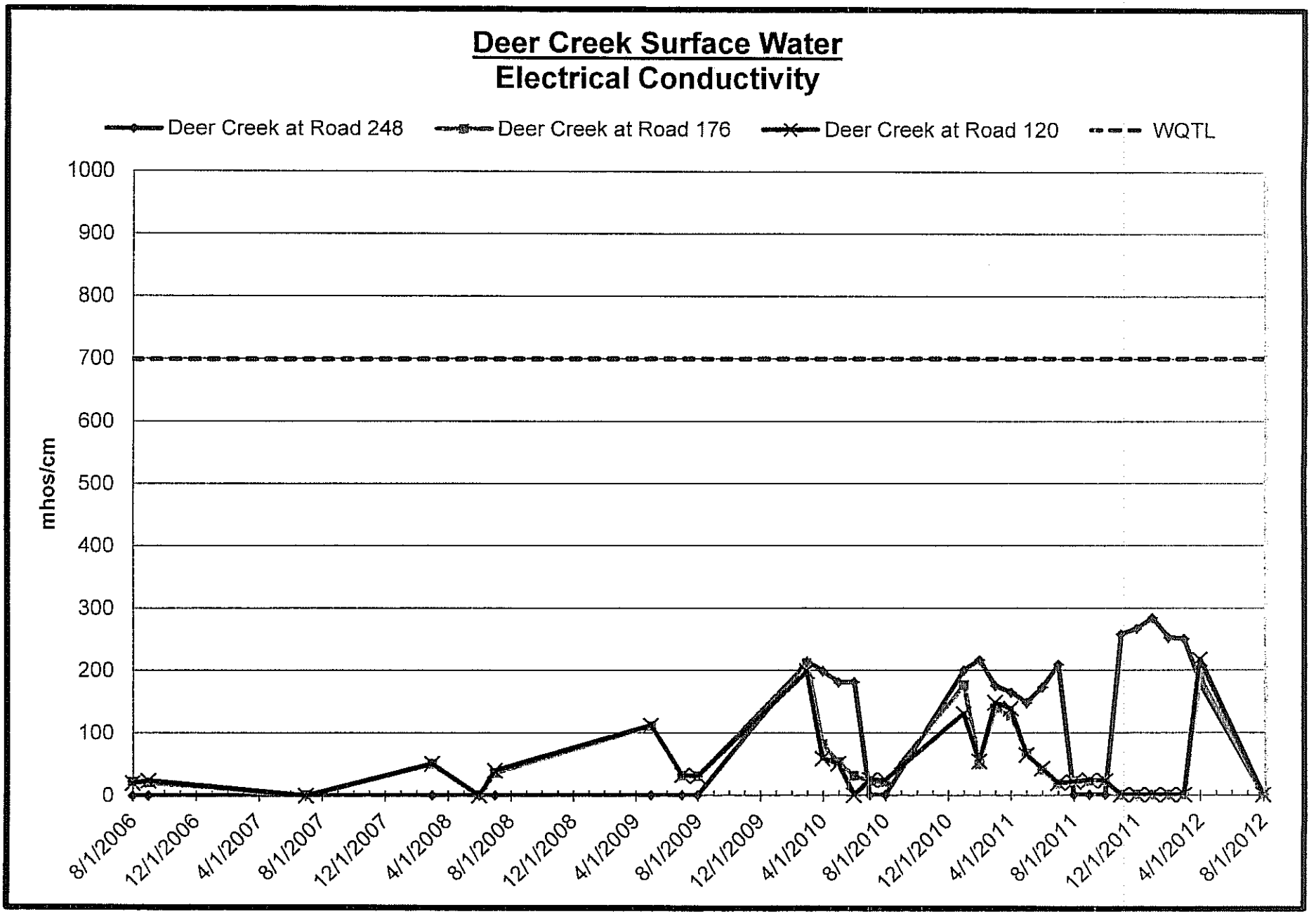


Attachment 2

Deer Creek Surface Water
Nitrate + Nitrite as N

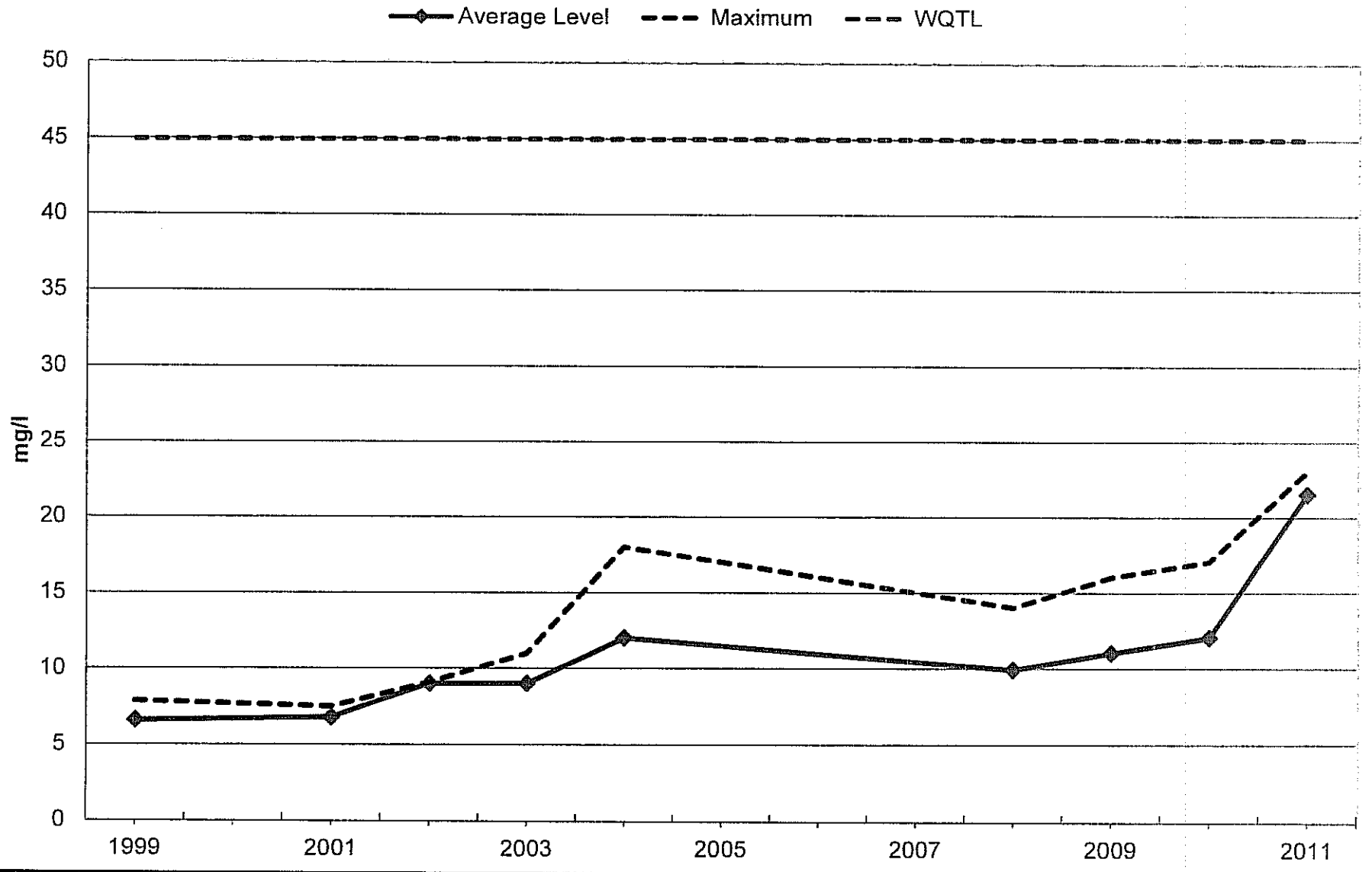


Attachment 3



Attachment 4

Tipton Community Service District
Nitrate (NO3) Data: 1999 - 2011



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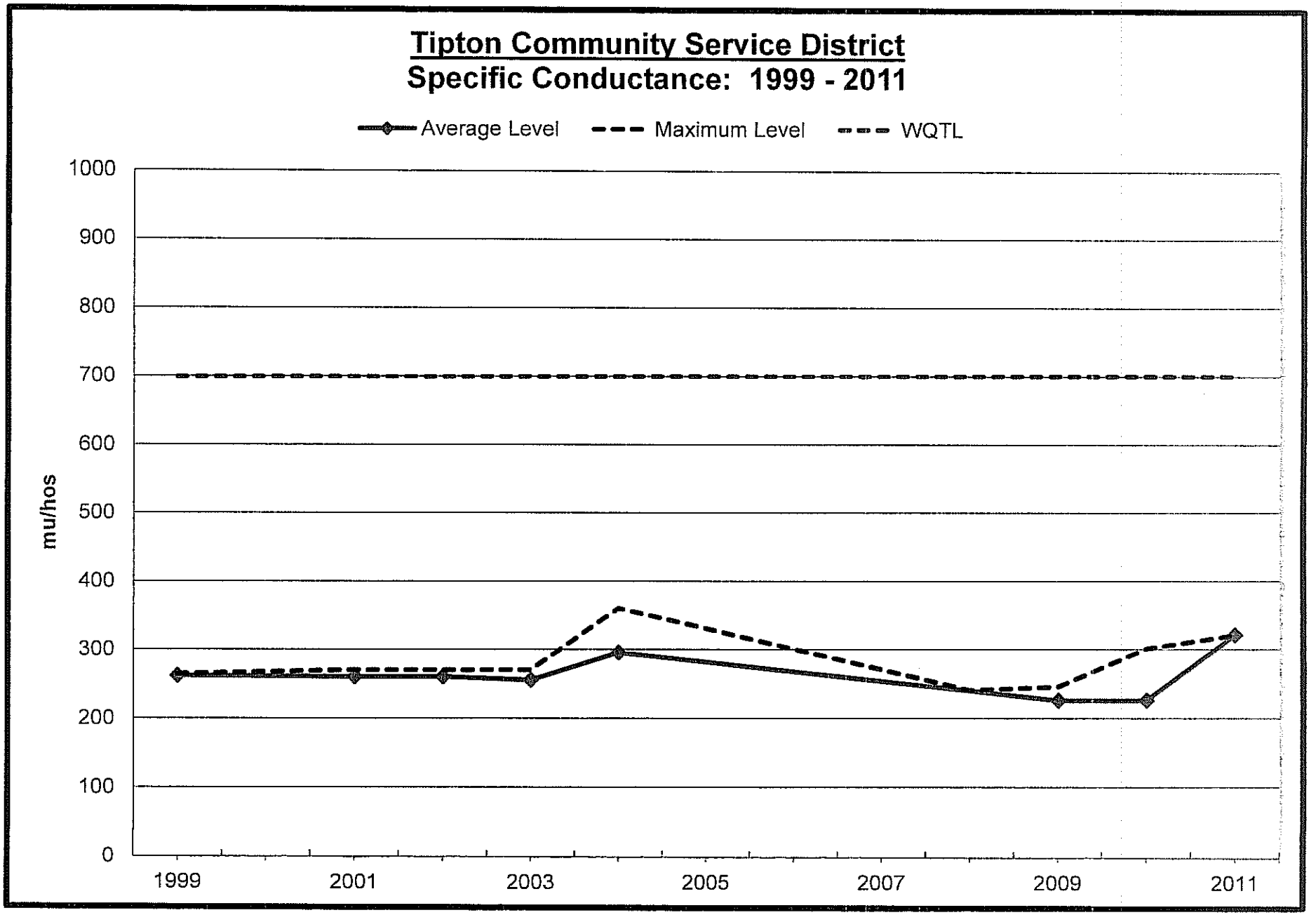
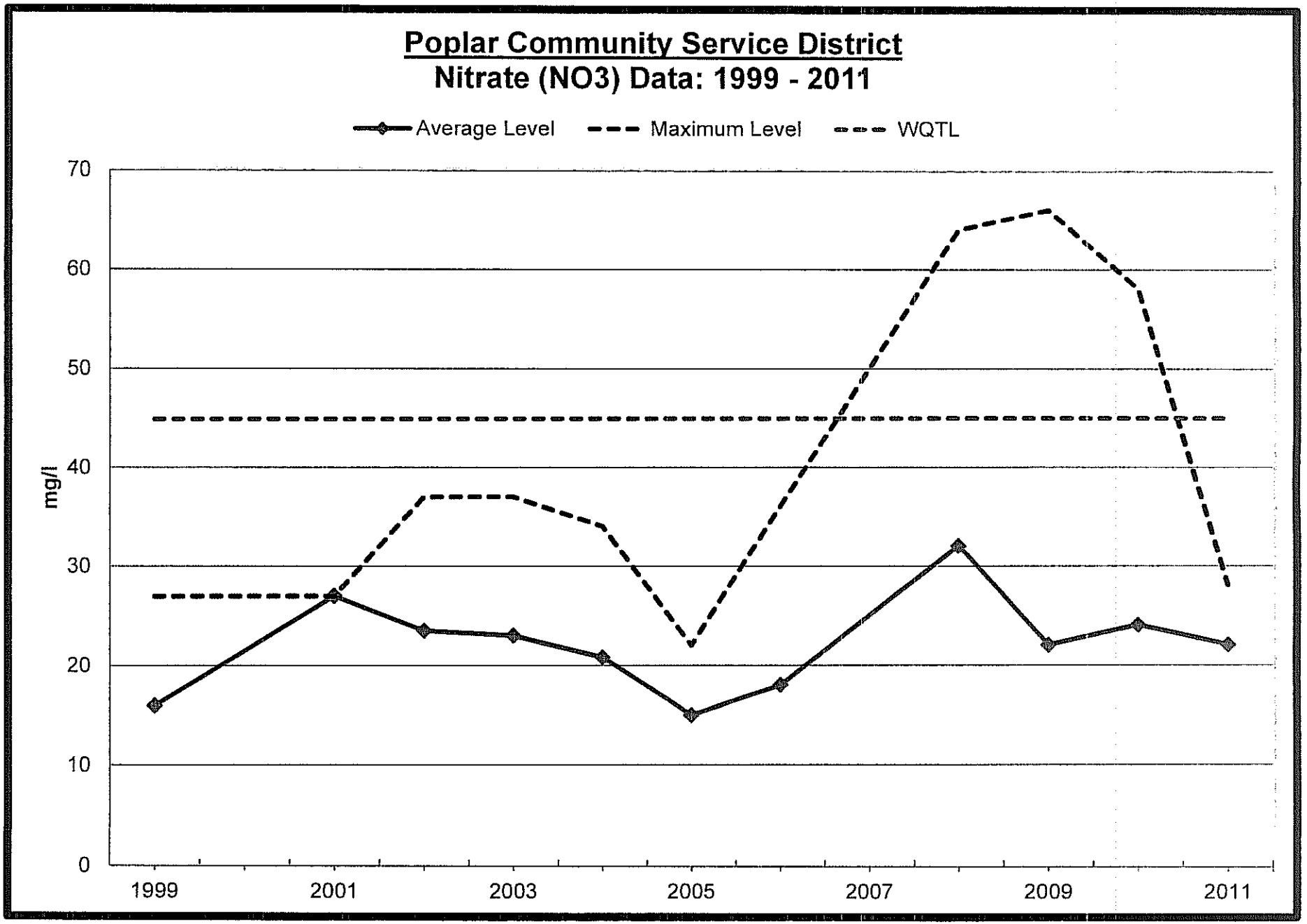


Attachment 6

Poplar Community Service District
Nitrate (NO3) Data: 1999 - 2011



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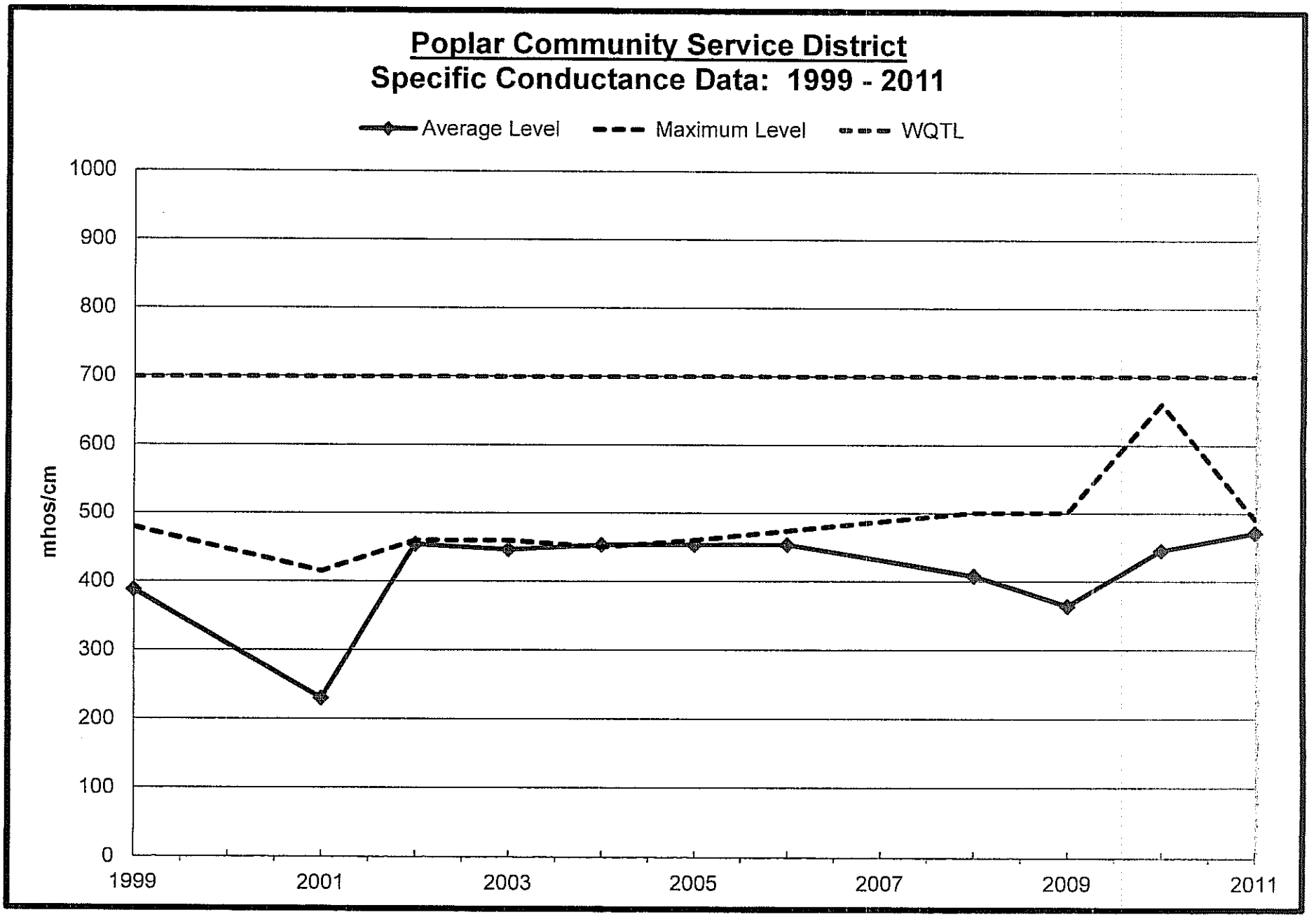
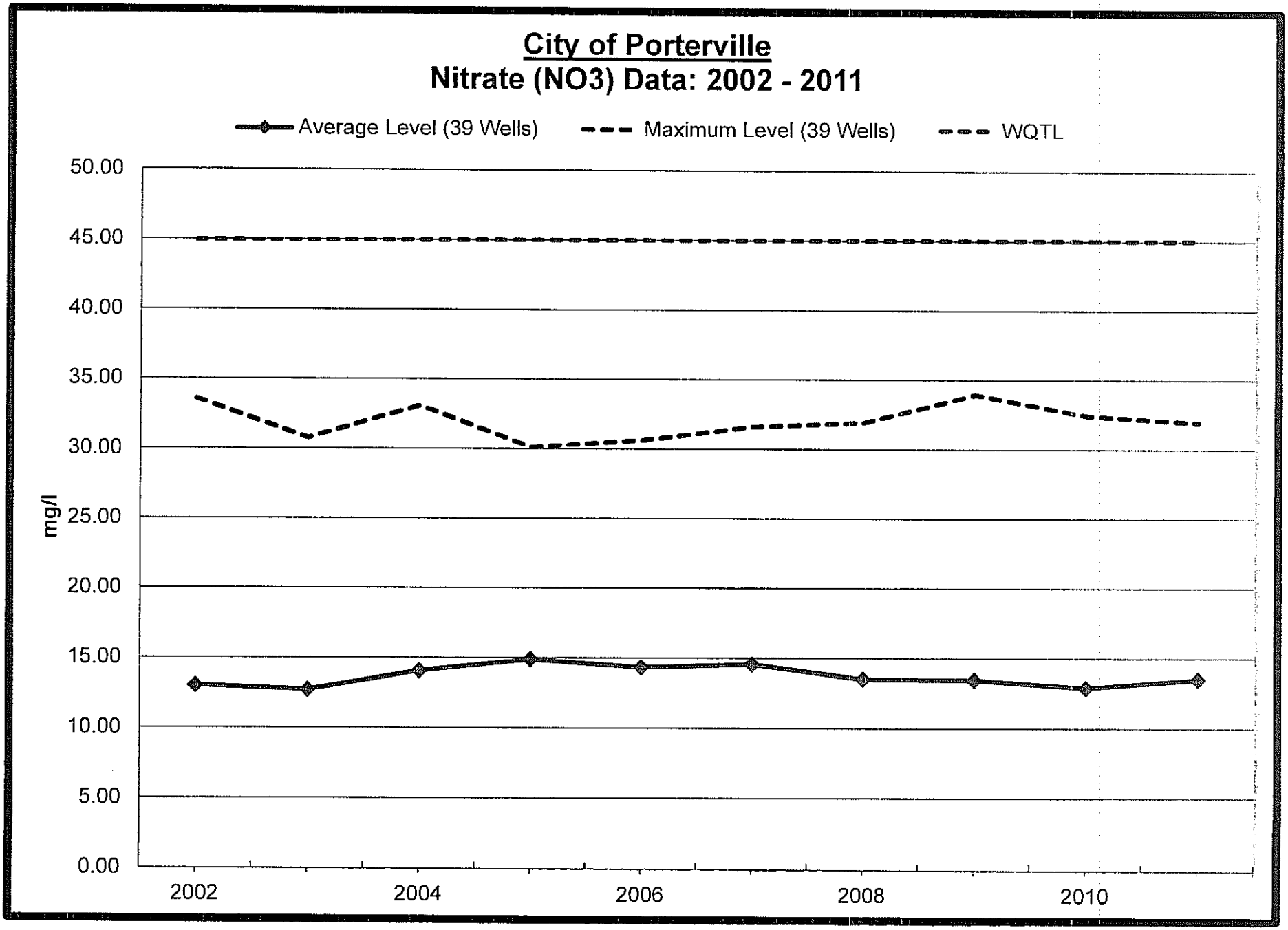


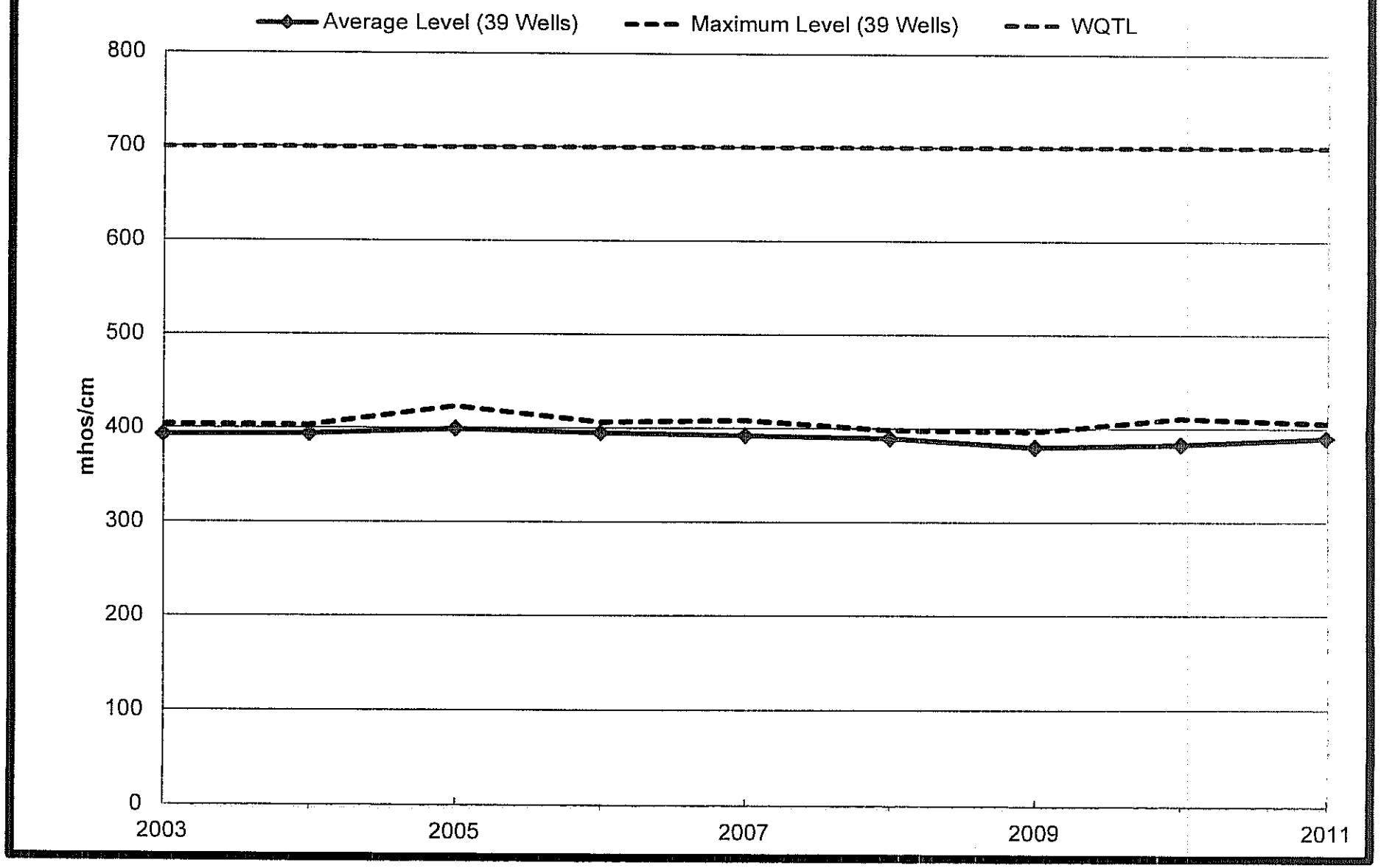
Attachment 8

City of Porterville
Nitrate (NO3) Data: 2002 - 2011



Attachment 9

City of Porterville
Specific Conductance Data: 2003 - 2011



Attachment 10